

Gilad's not so sweet music angers Jews across the board

An article about the recent activities of the anti-Zionist Jew Gilad Atzmon and the attempts by his political opponents to obstruct him.



Gilad Atzmon

Gilad Atzmon was born in Tel Aviv and served as a paramedic in the IDF. In the 1990s he moved to the UK as a student, graduated from the University of Essex, and later became a British citizen. With a Masters Degree in Philosophy he might have opted for a career in high academe, but instead became a professional musician, fusing his love of jazz with Middle Eastern, especially Arab music, and winning acclaim worldwide both as a saxophonist and as a composer. And as recent events have demonstrated, there are those who wish he would continue to develop his musical career, and keep his nose out of Middle East politics.

Gilad Atzmon is an anti-Zionist Jew, not a rare animal nowadays after two Intifadas, *Operation Cast Lead*, and the Flotilla Massacre, but there are those even amongst anti-Zionist Jews who believe he goes too far, and after considerable pressure from both sides, the University of Westminster cancelled a meeting he had organised for May 3 to discuss “Israel criminality in the wake of the Goldstone Retract”, as the *Jewish Chronicle* put it.

The meeting went ahead nevertheless, albeit at a different venue and with some necessary subterfuge, something that in the UK is usually reserved for meetings of the so-called “racist” right. Atzmon’s views on the meeting are espoused in [an article](#) *Winners and Losers*, published two days later. He is clearly more perturbed by anti-Zionist opposition to his *ad hoc* campaigning than by mainstream liberal Jews or Zionists. One of his fiercest critics, whom he accuses of actions bordering on betrayal, is Naomi Wimborne-Idrissi, who was arrested in June 2008 after an incident in which she unveiled a T-shirt which bore the slogan “Palestinian blood on Israeli hands” ; the charges were later dropped.

Being opposed by people who exhibit that sort of passion could be disheartening, but Atzmon obviously takes heart from what he alluded to earlier as a coming paradigm shift on the Middle East. He finished the packed meeting with what Lauren Booth — the sister-in-law of Tony Blair — referred to as his trademark frippery: “The real genius of the Jews (i)s that they made God into an estate agent and the *Bible* into a land registry”. Could any Gentile say that without causing a furore?

The other, Gentile, speakers at Atzmon’s meeting showed more reserve; he shared a platform with the author Alan Hart, former Middle East Chief Correspondent for Independent Television News; author, TV producer and publisher, Karl Sabbagh; and Palestinian journalist Sameh Habeeb.

Immediately afterwards, he flew off to New York for a short US tour combining jazz with more political meetings. It goes without saying that he will ruffle a few feathers there, and wherever he goes.

On May 9, Atzmon’s sister put the video of the London meeting on-line.

[The above op-ed was [published originally](#) May 6, 2011 (dated May 5) with the above photograph. It was deleted on or after March 3, 2021, (the last date it was archived).]